[English]

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly) : Sir, I would like to draw the attention of this House to a very serious matter. It pertains to the American Ambassador calling on the I&B Secretary at his office, on his own, and making suggestions about a Bill, which has yet to come to this House for consideration. It must be viewed as a very serious matter.

As you know Sir, the draft Broadcasting Bill has been discussed, although this House had not got the opportunity to go through the contents of the Bill. In a section of the Press, it has been widely publicised that the American Ambassador met the I&B Secretary and said that before finalisation of the draft, he should be consulted. He also said that the American Business Council and the American Channels Committee would like to see, in particular, the equity structure, the cross media restrictions and also the mandatory provisions for uplinking. He felt that they should not be there and the Americans' interests must be upheld in the proposed Broadcasting Bill.

This is something unprecedented and extraordinary. It involves the dignity and honour of this House, and also the sovereignty of this country.

I request the hon. Prime Minister and also the Government that whatever transpired in the discussions should be made public, and the hon. Prime Minister should make a statement in this House regarding this because it involves the dignity and honour of this House.

13.04 hrs.

RE: DELHI RENT CONTROL ACT

[Translation]

SHRI VIJAY GOEL (Sadar – Delhi) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, today the markets of Delhi have been closed. Traders, especially the tenants have launched a movement. I would like to draw the attention of the House towards the facts that Delhi Rent control Act was passed unanimously in this House in 1995. I do not know the circumstances in which it was passed ? But today not a single political party is in its favour. An elected Government was functioning in Delhi when this Bill was passed but representatives of this Government were not consulted for it. Later on it was felt that this Bill will increase disputes and court cases between tenants and owners of the buildings and a movement was launched. It was stated that this Bill is partial. Delhi Government had set up a committee for it which included Member from all the political parties like CPI, CPI (M), BJP, Janata Dal and congress. They had submitted a report and a copy of it is with me. Suggestions have been given to make some amendments in this Bill in the interest of tenants as well as the owners of the House. At that time, the then Prime Minister Narsimha Rao did not implemented it because he wanted to include the points suggested by the representatives of the Delhi Government. The, then Minister of Urban Affairs had given an assurance that this Bill would not passed or implemented without making amendments in it. The another Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee also did not implement it, Devegowda Government also did not implement it. Now Gujral Government is there but for tenants the threat of Delhi Control Act is still looms at large and they have a fear that their shops and houses can be vacated at any time under this Act. It Bill also provides that at time of death of a tenant his children have to vacate the house immediately. There is also a provision to increase the rent since 1949 and on presenting an aiffidevit by the owner the house could be vacated. The house can also be vacated if a dispute between two neighbours is reported. I am not talking for tenants only but these suggestions were given by representatives of all the political parties so before implementation of this Bill these amendments should be debated here in this House. The Government is there and political parties can have their say if they want to implement this Act but the Government should make a statement here because unanimous opinion has been drawn for it and traders and tenants should not be compelled to agitate for it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, Delhi markets have been closed down for three days. Tenants are in uncertainty as to whether he would be able to live in the house or shop occupied by him. In such a situation how can business will go on ? I demand that Shri Ram Vilas Paswan should make a statement on it so that people could get assurance that this Act will not be implement without making the required amendments into it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I seek your protection that instructions should be given to the Government that statement on it should be gives. Today thousands of traders are compelled to court arrest. Traders never take to agitation due to lack of time but they come to know that they will had nothing tomorrow if the same situation prevails for long.